



Representative **Kirk Pearson • 39th District**

2001 Session-End Report

October 2001

Dear Neighbors,

The terrible attacks on the United States last month have, unfortunately, brought a new perspective to the challenges that faced our state's legislators during the 2001 session.

We addressed the significant earthquake damage our state sustained, responded to the effects of a statewide drought and high-cost energy shortage, and worked through three special sessions regarding transportation, agriculture disaster relief and other pressing matters. These sessions dragged well into the just-ended summer, in what many veterans have called the most unusual year ever in the Legislature. However, our concerns now seem small compared to the tragedies that recently struck our nation. Those who have suffered and our national leaders continue to need our prayers and support.

I also have appreciated your support, your phone calls, e-mails, cards and letters the past few months. Together, we have been able to make a great deal of progress on issues important to families of the 39th District. This newsletter provides a brief insight to the highlights of the 2001 legislative year and those items I am continuing to work on that may affect you.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact me. I appreciate the honor of serving you.

Sincerely,

Kirk Pearson

State Representative • Assistant Republican Whip

House Committees: Appropriations
Education
Natural Resources - *Vice chair*

Budget is unsustainable

Developing an operating budget to run the state for the next two years was the Legislature's most important task. It was critical that we carefully match revenue projections with spending in order to avoid cuts in the future or pressure for tax increases. Incoming revenues have slowed, and with projected layoffs at Boeing, our revenue forecast is sharply down. The state simply didn't — and doesn't — have the money to meet all the demands.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I worked on setting priorities in the budget and making decisions about where to direct our limited resources, just like families must do when planning their household budgets. Unfortunately, in the end, the budget that was passed spends more than it will take in, including \$668 million in "one-time" money on ongoing programs. I voted no.

I was particularly concerned with a move to raid pension funds from firefighters and law enforcement officers. The state has a moral responsibility to uphold its promise to provide for these retirees. I held firm to prevent that bill from passing.

The task in the coming months will be to hold the line against the pressure for raising taxes that this budget is almost certain to create.

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Representative **KIRK PEARSON • 39th District**



Transportation efficiencies before tax increases

Before adjourning, the Legislature approved a transportation budget that provides nearly \$40 million to continue important road projects in the 39th District. Included in that list is: replacement of the Barclay Creek Bridge on State Route 2 near Index; modifying the SR 9/

SR 2 interchange near Snohomish; slope stabilization along SR 2 west of Stevens Pass; repaving SR 9 north of Arlington between the Stillaguamish River Bridge to the Lake Creek Bridge vicinity; repaving SR 9 in Lake Stevens; widening SR 9 from Schloman Road to 256th Street East north of Arlington; and providing a bypass route on SR 2 around the city of Monroe. Additionally, various smaller projects are funded around the county for signal lights, highway widening and safety improvements.

I understand the importance of a long-term transportation plan that protects our economy and keeps people and products moving. As a family man, I share the same concerns of spending more time in traffic trying to get home than being home and spending time with our families. Many of you told me that we needed to maximize the value of every dollar collected before seeking more taxes, so we focused first on efficiencies. We were able to pass legislation that not only will cut costs, but improve the Department of Transportation's performance.

For example, a bill to streamline the permitting process saves both time and money without lowering any environmental standards. We also approved a design-build measure, an agreement allowing the state to acquire rights-of-way for future projects while the land is still affordable, and took a small step toward competitive bidding. Even with these efficiencies, our transportation revenue is barely adequate to maintain the existing road system and finish projects that are under way.

Many proposals were considered. The governor wanted a multibillion-dollar transportation tax package that did not include any assurances that the money could

make a dent in our transportation problems. I do not believe this is a problem which can be solved by throwing money around indiscriminately.

Especially in this time of economic uncertainty, all citizens deserve to have a say in this process. Unfortunately, the governor backed off his promise to give voters the final say on such a large tax increase. That's the main reason why the third special session ended without enough votes, Democrat *or* Republican, to pass a comprehensive transportation package in the House.

Let it be understood that I want to be part of the solution by working with all my fellow legislators to implement a plan which will reduce traffic congestion throughout the Puget Sound region.



Rep. Pearson observes as Gov. Gary Locke signs House Bill 2049 into law. Prime-sponsored by Pearson, the bill will give businesses more leeway when trying to comply with more than 16,000 pages of rules, and prevent state agencies from automatically fining businesses for regulatory violations not discovered during previous technical assistance visits.

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Pearson works for pipeline safety

With nearly 13 million gallons of fuel each day being quietly transported through underground pipes stretching across Snohomish County, I want to make sure that another disaster, like the one in 1999 that killed three people in Bellingham, doesn't happen again.



This year, I co-sponsored legislation establishing permanent funding for a state pipeline inspection program. The program is to be funded by safety fees paid by every natural gas company and hazardous liquid pipeline company. The fees would fund pipeline inspection personnel, timely review of pipeline safety and integrity plans, development of spill response plans and maps of pipeline locations, participation in federal pipeline safety efforts, and staffing of the Citizens Committee on Pipeline Safety. The Senate measure, identical to my pipeline safety bill, passed the Legislature and was signed into law.

Clearing the air on gasoline additives

In recent years, the Environmental Protection Agency has discovered that the gasoline additive methyl-tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) causes cancer in laboratory animals. The chemical, now listed as a possible human carcinogen, travels quickly through groundwater and has been found in drinking supplies of several states. Although Washington is not among those states, and fuel industry officials say MTBE has never been mixed in Washington fuel refineries, troubling residues were found at nearly half of 70 service stations checked by the Department of Ecology last year. This year, I co-sponsored legislation that bans MTBE in Washington after Dec. 31, 2003. The measure passed the Legislature and was signed into law.



Leaving no child behind

Ensuring that every child in Washington is given the opportunity to succeed through a quality education is perhaps the most important task I face as your state representative.



As a House Education Committee member, I worked to address teacher shortages plaguing our schools. I co-sponsored legislation to allow retired teachers to be re-hired without cutting their pensions. I supported a measure that allows schools to hire community professionals, such as retired scientists and computer experts, as teachers through a streamlined process of certification. Teachers received salary increases and more money was provided to hire additional teachers in an effort to reduce classroom sizes.

Pearson bill aimed at reducing fraud

The Internet is quickly becoming a convenient way of getting hunting, fishing and auto licenses. Unfortunately, scam artists have also found it to be a way to profit through identity theft.



This year, I sponsored legislation at the request of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to make sure applicants aren't using false names or fraud to obtain recreational licenses. Under the bill, persons over 18 engaged in hunting or fishing may be required to show photo IDs to Fish and Wildlife officers if their recreational licenses were purchased by telephone or over the Internet. The measure discourages identity theft and will work to prevent someone from using different names to obtain multiple fishing and hunting licenses. The bill was signed into law by the governor.

Stopping eco-terrorism in its tracks

Terrorism in any shape or form is wrong and must be stopped. As the nation looks to seek out and stop terrorists throughout the world, we have a battle closer to home to stop the destruction of another kind of radical group – eco-terrorists.

Months before eco-terrorists destroyed the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture, I had introduced legislation to update our state's criminal sabotage laws. These laws, written in the early 1900s, fell far short of addressing modern terrorist acts.

Under current law, criminal sabotage is an unranked felony, not subject to a standard sentence range. Gener-

ally, courts may impose a sentence of less than a year confinement, community service and some restitution.

With millions of dollars in damages being inflicted by these groups, I wanted to send a message that eco-terrorism will not be tolerated in Washington. My bill would have made first-time offenders spend up to five years in prison and provided restitution equal to triple the damages. The measure came close to a vote on several occasions in the regular and special sessions, but time kept running out.

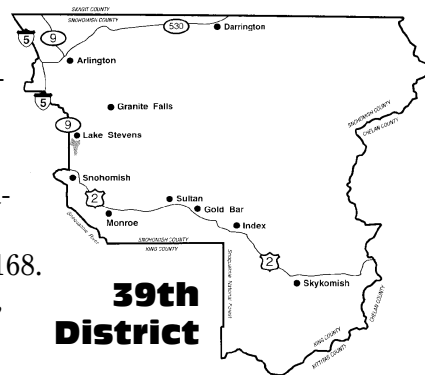
We are a nation of laws and there are avenues for reform. Sabotage is not one of them. I plan to continue working this bill to ensure innocent citizens are protected and eco-terrorists on our home front are brought to justice.

Representative **KIRK PEARSON** • 39th District

District office now open

I feel it is important to be accessible to the people I serve. That's why I've opened a 39th District office in Snohomish. If you have a concern, idea or suggestion about state government, drop by my office. Many bills in the Legislature are often the result of a citizen's suggestion. Also, if you find you are getting the runaround from a state agency, maybe I can help.

The 39th District office is at 432 Avenue D, Suite D, Snohomish. My legislative assistant, Cameron Bailey, will be pleased to serve you. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday. The phone number is: (425) 257-2168. If other arrangements need to be made (such as meeting after business hours), please call my office for an appointment. The Snohomish office will be open until January when we return to Olympia for the 2002 legislative session.



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Kirk Pearson
State Representative

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